

CSAP's Online Courses

Module 3: Substance Use and Other Risk Factors

Case No. 1

Mrs. Z is a retired teacher who is 75. She still occupies the same modest house she lived in while raising her children. Mrs. Z has two sons who do not get along. The eldest son, George, is 40 and lives across the country with his wife and three children. He runs a successful business. Mrs. Z's youngest son, Jeffrey, is 36 and lives alone. Jeffrey has had a string of failed investment ventures. When necessary, Mrs. Z has paid Jeffrey's rent and other expenses because of his financial difficulties.

At her last appointment, Mrs. Z's doctor noticed she appeared to have some memory problems. A specialist confirmed Mrs. Z has cognitive impairments that could be the result of ministrokes. She has stopped seeing friends, stays inside most of the time, and has started sleeping a lot. Sometimes she has difficulty remembering simple directions and finding the right words to express herself. Her ability to handle simple tasks, such as making a grocery list, has decreased. Following this assessment, Mrs. Z's son Jeffrey has assumed more responsibility for her care. However, signs exist that Jeffrey may be taking financial advantage of his mother. Mrs. Z has received several notices of termination of service for unpaid telephone and utility bills. In addition, Jeffrey was recently stopped and ticketed for driving under the influence. When the police stopped him, they discovered he had no insurance on the car.

Jeffrey has become extremely belligerent toward his mother and others involved in her care. He constantly reminds Mrs. Z of his caregiving responsibilities. Mrs. Z excuses her son's behavior and fears losing contact with him completely.